JLA USA
-Getting It Right Before It Ships-

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Mr. Stewart Parnell
[redacted]

Dear Mr. Parnell,

I appreciate the recent opportunity to visit your Blakely facility. In response to a request from the Peanut Corporation of America, JLA has been working with your company to investigate a recent complaint about Salmonella in roasted, granulated peanuts produced at your Blakely, Georgia facility. Upon review of the documents and a plant tour, I offer the following summary.

It is my understanding that organic Chinese peanuts were the source of the roasted, granulated peanut product that has been reported. After review with Danny Kilgore and Jeff McFay, it seems likely that the Chinese organic peanuts could be a source for the microbial hazards given the nature of fertilizers used on organic products. Based on our discussions, PCA Blakely does not document the inbound raw material microbial load and does not validate their roasting conditions to confirm temperature levels within the roasting zones. Salmonella is typically destroyed at 240F for 30 minutes. This time and temperature condition is based on even roasting and heating under ideal conditions without variation in moisture contents. Peanuts typically vary in moisture such that much of the roasting is an effort to drive off moisture first and then begin roasting. The roasting process used by PCA should be sufficient to kill most bacteria but without documentation to validate roasting temperatures, a kill step cannot be assumed. The fact that the roasted, granulated product was packaged in a raw peanut zone also indicates a likely scenario for cross contamination. The PCA Blakely plant had been using water in their cleanup operations which also adds to the possibility of microbial contamination.

The investigation suggests likely scenarios that microbial contamination could have occurred in the production and packaging of roasted, granulated peanuts at PCA Blakely. Efforts are underway to correct many of the issues address during the investigation and the management commitment to food safety is evident in the actions taken to date.

Respectfully Submitted,

Darlene M. Cowart, Ph.D.
President and COO
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